The Case Against Admiral Strauss

Two Physicists Lift the Curtain on His Arms and Security Policies, See Pages 2 and 3

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A Tricky Man With A Tricky Record

The most sensational though unnoticed news in the poorly reported hearings on the nomination of Admiral Strauss to be Secretary of Commerce was the revelation by Senator Anderson that the H-bomb originated in a "Disclosure of Invention" filed on May 26, 1946, by the late Dr. John von Neumann and Dr. Klaus Fuchs now finishing a jail term in Britain as a Soviet spy. The minor incident which revealed most about the tactics which have earned Admiral Strauss so much ill-will in Congress was also in the Anderson testimony. In discussing the Admiral's misuse of security regulations while Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Senator Anderson said he invited Strauss to make a speech in New Mexico, the Senator's home State, in January, 1956. When Strauss took advantage of the occasion to attack the Senator, Anderson wrote him " a pretty strong letter." Strauss sent a letter in reply on January 24, 1956, but stamped the letter "classified"! The Strauss letter, by quoting most of the Anderson letter, had the effect of classifying that, too. Senator Anderson said that two days later he was asked by the AEC to sign a classified materials receipt and thus warned that he could not disclose the correspondence without violating the law.

A Dictator in The AEC

The President was only telling half the story when at press conference he attributed the attacks on Strauss to "personal antagonisms." These personal antogonisms with important members of Congress and with the scientific community have been created by a history of petty trickery. This trickery has been designed not only to keep from Congress and the public information to which they were entitled but to mislead them on matters of importance. In his dealings with the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and with its chairman, Senator Anderson, and indeed with his fellow members of the Atomic Energy Commission, Admiral Strauss circumvented their statutory right to participate in decision making and turned the AEC into a little kingdom. A President has a right to have like-minded people in his Cabinet, and the Senate cannot properly base refusal to confirm on public policy grounds. But confirmation may justly be denied where over many years, in a field as crucial as atomic energy, a public official has shown that he cannot be trusted to be candid in his dealings with Congress and the public. Few men in the Senate are as patient, fair and magnanimous as Senator Anderson. It takes a lot of provocation to drive him into the two days of documented attack he was delivering on Strauss as we were going to press.

How the "Clean Bomb" Story Was Launched

Here is another sample from the voluminous case presented by Senator Anderson. The 1954 Atomic Energy Act amendments required the AEC to keep the Joint Committee fully informed. "His technique," Anderson testified, "was to deluge the Committee with considerable numbers of individual letters and reports. But on key questions he would hold out important information until its disclosure would serve his purposes, or sometimes until the Joint Committee got wind of something and forced his hand. A typical practice was to send up a letter with a press release after hours or on a Friday night or a week-end, so that he could get his story out without comment by Joint Committee members." Senator Anderson said a striking case was the first "clean bomb" announcement of July 19, 1956. The Joint Committee had no advance notice. Chairman Strauss's alibi was that his liaison officers had tried to get in touch with the Committee at 6:40 p.m. the evening before publication but that the offices were closed. Senator Anderson said Joint Committee records showed the Committee was open that night until 6:35 p.m. "Mr. Strauss must have posted a watchman at our door," the Senator said, "to permit his office to deliver to our office the information five minutes after the office closed." The result, the Senator concluded, "was that Mr. Strauss stole a march in his ill-starred effort to persuade the people of this country and the world that the 'clean bomb' is 'humanitarian.' As you know, the effort fell flat and has been allowed to die on the vine."

The Dixon-Yates Story Still Unfinished

The Admiral's record on the AEC is not irrelevant to his fitness to be Secretary of Commerce. The Department of Commerce has a great deal to do with the scientific community where Strauss is deservedly unpopular. The Bureau of Standards, which issues the handbooks on nuclear radiation protection; the Coast and Geodetic Survey, which checks on the seismic effects of underground testing and the means of its detection; the Weather Bureau, which studies atmospheric contamination; these are all in the Department of Commerce. There is no doubt that Admiral Strauss has only been doing what he passionately believes to be the best for his country but there is also no doubt that he is high-handed, secretive, arrogant and unscrupulous in pursuing these objectives. There are also the unresolved questions in the Dixon-Yates affair, where a banker who was a vice president of First Boston served at the same time as a Budget Bureau consultant in working out the contract in which his firm had an interest. The government itself in the Court of Claims has been arguing that the conflict is void because of this conflict of interest. Senator Anderson, like Senator Kefauver, feels that the serious contradiction between Strauss' testimony and that of other officials in this affair ought to be cleared up before confirmation. And no one ought to be more anxious for this than Strauss himself.

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Two Pages of Excerpts from Scientist Testimony Against Lewis Strauss

"Single Track" Reliance on Nuclear Arms Race Called Disastrous

On these two pages we present excerpts from testimony by scientists against the confirmation of Lewis Strauss as Secretary of Commerce. Dr. David R. Inglis, incoming chairman of the Federation of American Scientists, a theoretical physicist with the Argonne National Laboratory for the last nine years, testified before the Senate Commerce Committee on April 30. David L. Hill, a former chairman of the FAS, a physicist who worked six years at Los Alamos, appeared on May 1. Their testimony has been so misrepresented we thought readers would like to see their own words.

(From the Testimony of Dr. David R. Inglis)

"We are marching almost blindly into an intolerably dangerous situation, and our chances for surviving as a recognizable nation through many decades seems rather small. Our national guilt—if I may put it that way—for getting ourselves and the world into this unhappy fix without looking really seriously for acceptable alternatives is due in no small measure, in my opinion, to the narrow dedication of Mr. Strauss to the single-track approach of modern weaponry with no toleration for negotiations as a parallel track toward future security.

"The world crisis we are dealing with is primarily an atomic crisis, and in meeting it President Eisenhower has been dependent most heavily on advice on atomic matters. He made Mr. Strauss the head of the AEC, in recognition not only of his great personal charm, an example of which we have seen here this morning, but also of his effectiveness in getting things done and the importance of his dedication to modern atomic weaponry.

"Not Always Strictly Ethical"

"I presume the President had in mind keeping decisions simple within his team when he further selected Mr. Strauss as his special adviser on atomic matters. I doubt that the President fully realized to what extent he was cutting himself off from a balanced view in confining himself to a single channel of highly opinionated information and judgment on the problem of atomic energy as related to diplomacy. I believe he underestimated Mr. Strauss' ability to shatter opposing views by tactics which seem to me not always strictly ethical.

In speaking of negotiation, I do not mean to imply, either, that it is easy to negotiate with Russia—we all know some of the difficulties—nor that the most carefully prepared and earnestly motivated negotiations would with certainty have ended in useful agreements. I do mean that we and the Russians have very strong mutual interests in trying to avoid a war of annihilation—for example, that we should both want very much right now to keep the nuclear club small, and that we have not as a nation sincerely put our shoulders to the job of trying to take advantage of these mutual interests.

Bulganin Offered Ground Check Posts

"As an example of the degree to which we have not even been really alive to the idea of negotiation, I want to mention one isolated instance, the fact that in 1955 Premier Bulganin, who was then a top man in the USSR, suggested in a letter to President Eisenhower the setting up of ground inspection posts at different places throughout both our countries, as one means of suppressing surprise attack. To this small extent, he was offering to open up the iron curtain.

"Instead of simply accepting this offer, or even exploring how much observation equipment could be put in the control posts, what we did was in effect simply to turn it down, by attaching unacceptable strings. Even prior to this, there were people who urged that we should stop nuclear tests as a means of controlling the development of nuclear weapons, but not until this last year have some of our policy makers come to realize how important it could have been if we then set up ground inspection posts.

The Assumption of Innate Superiority

"The reason our negotiators at that time were not given more scope was that Mr. Strauss and his close associates promoted their belief that a one-track atomic policy would keep us safe, or, more specifically, that we are inherently so much better than the Russians at research and development that in a free race without any limiting ground rules we can keep ahead forever.

"I sincerely believe that we would quite probably be in a better position today and face a much better situation in the future—and in any event would be no worse off—if we had tried much harder in the past, perhaps starting with a large-scale research project to discover and exploit all the possibilities of increasing national security through negotiations.

The Need for Alternatives

"Such an effort need not and should not have involved one whit of reduction in our buildup of weapons systems except as we might be able to elicit matching and verifiable concessions from the Russians and eventually from other potential nuclear nations. This second track would not interfere with the first. Two tracks would be better than one in trying to avoid a collision.

Beginning to Sound Like Strauss

"It is the unanimous position of all the eighteen members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that these tests are not detrimental, in a global way, to the people of the world. If there is any danger involved, it would be of such an infinitesimal amount that I doubt if it could be proven in a laboratory to be of deleterious effect upon a human being."

—Cong. Chet Holifield, Face The Nation, May 3.

"Gordon Fair, Professor of Public Health Engineering at Harvard University, when he gave the Chadwick lecture here today . . . speaking before experts from many parts of the world on the second day of the Royal Society of Health Congress, said the increase in the incidence of disease ascribed to fallout from weapon tests conducted before 1957 was reported to 'account for the birth of 2,500 to 13,000 genetically defective children in the world and from 25,000 to 100,000 cases of leukemia and bone tumor considered together.' Some people believe these estimates to be low."

—The Times (London) April 29.

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Physicist Lifts Curtain on Other Cases and Sheds New Light on Oppenheimer

Strauss Accused of Using Security Procedures for Personal Revenge

(From the Testimony of David L. Hill)

"I would now like to turn to a second trait of character, which I believe should have some attention in considering the qualifications of the nominee. I refer to his record of personal vindictiveness against those who have persisted in disagreeing with him regarding policies he has promoted.

"I recall the remark of a good friend of mine who had served closely with Lewis Strauss in an official capacity for some years. He commented that if you disagree with Lewis Strauss on a matter of official policy, he concludes at first that you must be misinformed. If the disagreement continues after an effort on his part to provide more information, then he tends to suggest that you may be either stupid or just stubborn. But if the disagreement continues beyond a second round of argument, then he comes seriously to question your loyalty to the country and even your sanity.

Carroll Wilson His First Victim

"Shortly after the nominee became Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission he apparently started to work on a few of the people who had dared to disagree with him in the past. The first to receive his attention was Carroll Wilson, who had been General Manager of the AEC during the period when Strauss was a minority of one on most of the issues coming before the Commission.

"Wilson had left the Commission for private employment some time earlier but had retained his Q-clearance. Immediately after Strauss' appointment an unusually intensive security investigation was suddenly initiated on Wilson. At the same time, his employer, the Climax Uranium Company, of which Wilson was an officer, received a strong indication that Strauss felt he should have been consulted before such a man as Wilson had been hired.

"Then there is the case of Malcolm Henderson. He had designed the long-range detection system to warn of Soviet atom bomb tests, but he also had disagreed with Strauss in the past on policy matters. Henderson retained his Q-clearance after leaving the employ of the AEC and was offered and accepted the post of scientific adviser to the Secretary of the National Security Council, General Robert Cutler. Admiral Strauss heard about it, however, and the offer was immediately withdrawn. Next he took a position at the Civil Defense Administration only to be notified that his Q-clearance had been withdrawn.

"R. Gordon Arneson had served for eight years and with considerable distinction as State Department liaison officer with the AEC, but he too had argued on questions of policy with Mr. Strauss. Consequently one day he was summoned to the office of Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith and was bluntly informed that Strauss did not like him, that he could have another job, but that he must end his work immediately as AEC Liaison Officer.

"From the standpoint of the public welfare, the most injurious exercise of personal vindictiveness in which Lewis Strauss has engaged was in the personnel security prosecution of J. Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer had not hesitated to express his disagreement with Mr. Strauss on certain question of fundamental policy. One of these was the government policy of shipment abroad of radioisotopes. During Congressional hearings in 1949, Oppenheimer had made mincemeat out of Strauss' position of opposition to the shipments and Strauss never forgave him for this public humiliation.

The H-Bomb Controversy

"Another controversy between them centered around their differences in judgment on how the H-bomb would contribute to the national security. He had considerable influence and prestige in government circles. To eliminate this influence, Strauss again found it advantageous to turn to the personnel security system in order to destroy his effectiveness. He took advantage of a letter written by William Borden to the FBI as the basis for bringing the file once more before the Atomic Energy Commissioners for review. It contained nothing of significance that had not already been reviewed and rehashed many times before.

"The other Commissioners did not realize what was afoot when the matter first came up and the majority were wholly unimpressed by the new data. They expected nothing to happen, but Strauss went privately to the President without consulting his colleagues. As a result of that meeting the President gave the famous 'blank wall' order and Strauss then confronted the other Commissioners with this accomplished fact."

Lying About The 'Cleaner' Bomb

"During a recent test series in the Pacific, Mr. Strauss commented that the current test series was engaged in making 'cleaner' bombs. A few days later a colleague of mine at Los Alamos came to me and remarked, 'At the very time that Mr. Strauss was making that statement I was engaged in experiments in the Pacific designed to increase the amount of poisonous fallout from nuclear bombs.' Then he asked me, with a sense of dismay in his voice, 'Why does Strauss have to volunteer such outright lies'?"

—David L. Hill testimony.

The Holifield Radiation Hearings Seem Stacked for the AEC Viewpoint

The Holifield subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy began four days of hearings May 5 "on fallout from nuclear weapons tests." We expect to report on them next week. The schedule of witnesses is disappointing. The witnesses are heavily weighted on the AEC official side. No witnesses were invited from the independent scientists who have been working in Minnesota, South Dakota and St. Louis nor has a hearing been granted to Dr. Linus Pauling for all his eminence in the field. The schedule looks like a series of AEC briefings with some very familiar scientific stuffed shirts. A few independents like Jack Schubert will be heard on the round tables. The chairman, Chet Holifield, we are sorry to say, showed on Face The Nation May 3, two days before the hearings, that he had prejudged many of the issues he is supposed to investigate and in one striking case—his discussion of genetic effects—that he was not clear on a fact which no one in the scientific community doubts.

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With Stewart Confirmed, the Supreme Court May Now Decide on Barenblatt

The Scull Case Foreshadows A New Judicial Ruling Against the Witch Hunt

The starkly sectional minority vote again Mr. Justice Potter Stewart proved that the five months delay before his confirmation was a kind of filibuster. The character of the nominee was not questioned; even Eastland called him "a man of integrity." It was simply that every Senator from every Southern State except Texas and Tennessee felt compelled to vote "no" either out of hatred for the Court or in fear of the mob spirit in their home States.

It would be better to let the Supreme Court sit with one or two temporary vacancies than subject it again to the humiliations risked by recess appointments. Mr. Justice Stewart has been sitting since October 14. What if the nominee had been with the majority in a 5-to-4 decision and had then been rejected by the Senate? The moral force of the decision might be questioned. What if the new nominee had been in a 5-to-4 decision which angered Northern rightists and led them to join the South against his confirmation?

Waiting for Something to Turn Up?

Eastland, using his key position as chairman of Senate Judiciary, may have delayed action in the hope that just such a decision might give the South some allies. There has been unusual delay by the Court in deciding three contempt cases argued together last Fall. The Court did not hand down its decision in the first of these—the Scull case—until the day before the Senate voted.

In this case, the Virginia legislature used the device of what might be called an "un-Southern activities" committee to harass a brave printer, David H. Scull, for daring to organize a group in Virginia to help enforce the law of the land on integration. A unanimous Court, speaking through Mr. Justice Black, reversed Mr. Scull's conviction for contempt in refusing to answer questions about his political views and associations. The ruling was similar to that in the *Watkins* case. The Court held that the Committee had failed to make clear the pertinence of these questions to any lawful legislative purpose, and warned that the Court would scrutinize any such questions sharply where they threatened to inhibit the exercise of First Amendment rights.

This failed to produce a single Northern vote against the Stewart nomination. Mr. Scull is a Quaker; he was suspected of association with the NAACP, a hobgoblin only below the Mason-Dixon line. But the two remaining cases, *Barenblatt* and *Uphaus* involve association with Communists, and will affect the powers of the House Un-American Activities Committee and its imitators in Northern States. Eastland may have been waiting for these rulings; the Court may have outwaited him.

We believe the new decisions will further undermine the witch hunt. Former President Truman has been doughtily celebrating his 75th birthday by a series of speeches calling the House Committee the most un-American institution in American life; his attacks should help buttress any new rulings of this kind by the Court; every American who cherishes the First Amendment is grateful to him for speaking out.

The Right of Privacy Eroded

The Court split 5-to-4 in the *Frank* case last Monday with Frankfurter, Clark, Harlan, Whittaker and Stewart against Douglas, Warren, Black and Brennan. The effect was to erode constitutional safeguards against searches without a warrant. Mr. Justice Frankfurter for the majority held that a Baltimore health inspector could enter a private house without a warrant because he was not seeking evidence for a criminal prosecution and such inspections had been customary in Baltimore for more than a century. Mr. Justice Douglas for the minority objected that acquiescence did not create constitutionality and (quoting Judge Prettyman) that it was a "fantastic absurdity" to hold that a man suspected of no crime had less protection in the privacy of his home than a criminal suspect.

Fuzzy White House and Indifferent Senate

"I hadn't thought even about the idea that it needs new law. . . . I don't know how you can make the law stronger except to have it. . . . I know the FBI is on the job, and I have every confidence that they and the State Department (sic) . . . will find some way of punishing the guilty, if they can find them."

—Eisenhower on the Miss. lynching, May 6.

"In checking. . . . I was surprised to find that no proposed legislation on this subject [lynching] has as yet been introduced in the Senate during this session, although four bills are now before the House [which] . . . has passed legislation on this subject five times since 1937."

—Hart (D. Mich.), U. S. Senate, April 30.

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All copies of last week's issue addressed to District of Columbia subscribers inexplicably disappeared in the local postoffice; a duplicate mailing went out last Tuesday. Let us know if you have not received the May 4 issue.

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